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THE PSYCHOLOGICAL SELF AND THE ACTUAL PERSONALITY.¹

I. *Psychological Analysis and Actual Experience.*

THE obvious point of departure for psychological analysis is the existence of states of consciousness as these are recognized by common sense. Now, on examination, these states reveal two distinct characteristics. On the one hand, they are given *contents*, and, on the other hand, they are living *processes*,—states of consciousness *exist* and *flow*. And, since the first business of a science is to analyze, to reduce the complexity of its phenomena to their simplest possible terms, psychology begins with the search for structural elements of consciousness. But this first step in psychology involves necessarily the neglect of the fluid and dynamic character of consciousness. For the purposes of analysis the psychologist must transform a *living process* into *arrested content* or *static element*. It follows that by the study of the structural elements of consciousness psychology can never get hold of the actual self of immediate experience.

The fundamental method of psychology is *analytic*. Normal descriptive psychology concerns itself with the description in terms of analysis of the most elementary and general features of consciousness. Of course psychology has its synthetic side as well. Having reached its limits of analysis, or, in other words, having arrived at the most irreducible or simplest terms available for the general description of the facts of consciousness, psychology proceeds to build up the concrete mental life out of these elements. It finds laws of connection or causal relations, etc., between its elements. But both sides of the process of psychological description are necessarily artificial. The elements are artifacts and, by consequence, the laws of connection are artificial and the resultant unity of the mind instituted by psychological synthesis is not the actual unity of concrete experience.

¹ Paper read in part before the American Philosophical Association at its fourth annual meeting in Philadelphia, December, 1904.

On the other hand, the explanatory and practical value of structural psychology will depend on its constant endeavor to relate its artificial 'elements' and principles of connection as directly and closely as possible to the actual consciousness of concrete, living experience. In order that it may prove of value in education, history, and the normative sciences, and in the practical work of law, criminology, etc., psychology must keep as closely in touch with the actual movement of consciousness in the individual as its analytical procedure will allow. It is a mistaken devotion to simplicity and exactness which, misled by the analogies and successes of physics and chemistry, sets up elements and laws of connection that have no recognizable relation to actual experience, and that are so remote from the plane of naïve experience from which psychology sets out that the passage back to the world of concrete consciousness becomes a violent leap, a *μετάβασις εἰς ἄλλο γένος*. When the outcome of psychological explanation is a mechanical system of elements that conveys no feeling of resemblance to the actual consciousness of everyday experience and historical description, and consequently affords no aid at all in social inter-communication, education, biography, or history, it is difficult to understand what function psychology has left to perform except that of acting as surrogate to an incompleated physiology.¹

Although structural psychology, in its analysis of specific mental contents, does not lay hold on the actual self, the latter is presupposed as the source of its materials and the final instrument for the synthetic reinterpretation of the results of analysis. Every step in the analysis of consciousness as *state* or *content* presupposes the self to which the content belongs, the self that has the state and makes the analysis, but that itself forever eludes envisagement and analysis. This self is the seen that unseen sees. It is the subject-self to which all content belongs in immediate feeling, but which itself can never be a content. The objectification of immediate feeling yields the *object-me* never the *subject-I*. The latter remains the living bearer of all conscious process, the 'I feel' of all concrete and immediate experience.

¹ I have in mind here the method of treatment which perhaps finds its most consistent and thoroughgoing development in Professor Münsterberg's *Grundzüge der Psychologie*.

Introspection, the point of departure and return for all psychology, is doubtless mainly retrospection. It is *memory* which makes possible psychology as well as the naïve consciousness of a continuous self-identity. But retrospective analysis works on contents or data implicitly recognized as belonging to an individual center of consciousness. Retrospection presupposes a self that is one and continuous with the present self which has and analyzes the experiences recalled from the past.

The relation between the subject-I and the contents of consciousness with which structural analysis is concerned is roughly parallel to the relation which obtains between the total actual self of the ordinary naïve life-consciousness and its most significant deeds and interesting experiences as these come up in retrospective review. In neither case is there any separate *self-consciousness* in contrast to the actual movements of the mind in its immediate and engrossing moments of life. No *presented-self* looms over against the dynamic movement of active psychological analysis, or over against the immediate rapture of love, the joy of æsthetic contemplation, the vital stress of fateful action. Nevertheless the existence of psychical data and their recognition by the psychologist would be meaningless without the presupposition of an 'I' which feels and reflects upon these data just as the recognition of a deed, a rapture, or a sorrow as *mine* would be meaningless without the presupposition of an 'I' in me which is one and continuous in the variety and movement of its deeds and experiences.

I have just used the expression 'an I in the me.' It would be truer to say, although spatial metaphors are at best misleading in this connection, that the 'me' is in the 'I.' The 'me' of objectified analyzable content is a phase or moment of the 'I,' crystallized or precipitated from the living fluidity of self-movement. The 'me' is a fragment of the actual 'I,' arrested and torn from its context in the dynamic process of experience, projected and nailed down as if existing in space. The 'me' of structural analysis as of naïve retrospection is become a definite *thing*. The 'I' of actual, living experience is not a thing at all. It transcends the passive givenness of things in space. But whenever the

movement of the self is arrested and the present is filled up by retrospection, whether this arrest take place in naïve reflection or in psychological analysis, the whole state considered is necessarily *objectified*, and we have fixated a transverse section of an experience that in its actuality flows and changes. Hence the contents of the object-self or 'me' seem to have a spatial and bodily character. The consciousness which affords the materials for structural analysis is spatial and quasi-material.¹ In this respect psychology simply carries forward the objectifying work of ordinary introspection. The contemplation of any content of consciousness by a self innocent of psychological training, the attempt to recall a past experience, to reconsider an action or an emotion, to remember a conversation or a poem one has heard or read, involves *ipso facto* the materialization of the self. The experience or content of consciousness is indeed recognized as *mine*, but it is dealt with as something *given and fixed*, as a fact having position, order, and relations in space and time, and, in so far as I identify myself with this content or find myself therein, I am regarding my Ego, too, as given, as a fact or object having position and relations in space and time. Hume was right in saying that when he looked within he found, never himself, but some particular impression or idea. And structural psychology, by the very nature of its methods and materials, is confined to the Humian position.

On the other hand, as a matter of immediate feeling, awareness, or intuition, I know that I who remember, introspect, judge myself, determine myself, am not at all a given object. It is not as object of analysis but as subject of immediate feeling and emotion, as doing and suffering, enjoying and regretting, choosing and analyzing, affirming and denying, that the self is felt to transcend space and time relations. But as soon as the self and its contents begin to be treated as presented objects, they are in-

¹This, if I understand him, is what M. Bergson means, when he says "Notre corps n'est point autre chose que la partie invariablement renaissante de notre représentation, la partie toujours présente," etc. (*Matière et mémoire*, p. 164), and "Dans cette continuité de devenir qui est réalité même, le moment présent est constitué par la coupe quasi instantanée que notre perception pratique dans la masse en voie d'écoulement," etc., *op. cit.*, p. 150.

evitably given space and time relations, *i. e.*, they become part of the physical world order. It is not structural psychology which first transforms consciousness in this way. The most rudimentary consideration of a fact of consciousness as given involves its materialization, and hence in naïve, common-sense thinking a fact of consciousness is not regarded as immaterial. And similarly the ordinary conception of the self is that of a quasi-material entity.

On the other hand, the immediacy and intimacy of living, of suffering and doing, of failing and achieving, of sorrowing and rejoicing, always carries with it the sense of a self-hood that is not a mere fact, not an object at all, not circumscribed in space or shut up in this time-order. Further, in every deep-going experience or action, in emotions and deeds, in significant thought-activity, etc., the whole self is felt to be present and to function as a concrete unity and yet not to be fully expressed in any single emotion or activity.

It is on this immediate feeling of a dynamic unity, this direct sense of inner self-initiated movement, that the functional view of the self rests. There is in immediate living the feeling of an active, unitary process which seems to *be* the self. This experience of active self-hood develops, and it varies in its *activity* from the relatively passive attitudes in which the self seems to be purely recipient of impressions to the active attitudes of reasoning, choosing, etc. In its *unity* it varies from the almost utter distraction of a self unable to think or do anything coherently and consecutively up to the absolute concentration of a mind that follows one dominant object of interest from year to year. Functional psychology tries to do justice to this immediate self, and so it conceives and explains psychical processes in teleological terms, *i. e.*, as instruments of adjustment to environment, as organic functions by which experience is enlarged, deepened, and harmonized. Functional psychology is thus led to emphasize the dynamic or conative aspect of consciousness. It makes large use of such terms as 'strain,' 'tension,' 'striving.' It emphasizes the prospective reference of consciousness and has a predilection for biological categories, for adjustment and readjustment, for

growth and integration, for environment and situation, etc. It interprets the movement of consciousness teleologically as a genetic development with reference to ends conceived as states of self-realization. It brings out the end-positing, end-fulfilling character of self-activity.

In short, the categories of functional psychology are dynamic rather than static. It speaks of process in place of content, of inner tension in place of presentations of muscular experience. It substitutes for the analysis of self into its structural elements a biological and genetic account of the self as a unity. And in this account the self is conceived as an end-realizing activity, a conscious *ἐνέργεια*. From this description it is evident that the functional view of the self really passes beyond the limits of presentation or of the 'given' in consciousness, and that it delves below the surface of experience in order to fill out its account. It may, therefore, be questioned whether it is not, properly speaking, a philosophy rather than a psychology. It has to make constant reference to environment and to the self's relation therewith. Its categories of adjustment, harmony, integration, etc., involve a philosophy. My only quarrel with the view of the self that it employs is that it tends to deal too exclusively in biological categories. This tendency is due no doubt to the fact that the teleological and historical elements of biological thinking seem to be more adequate to the actual self of immediate experience than the static categories of mechanical science. But biological conceptions are not really sufficient for an adequate account of the actual self. The end-positing or teleological activity of the living personality is not accurately described in biological terms as a mere instrument for satisfying organic needs, a means of adjustment to an external environment in the creation of which selfhood has no part or lot. For the environment of selves is preëminently *mental* or *spiritual*. This environment is constituted by the social relations of selves, and is, in turn, the dynamic or moving resultant of the historical inter-relations and activities of selves.

II. *The Actual Personality and Historical Culture.*

My aim in the remainder of this paper will be to propose and illustrate a method of considering the self, which, by reason of its emphasis on the historical factor in personality, may be called 'metahistorical' and, in contradistinction to the psychological may be called 'noölogical.'¹ As will be apparent, I trust, in the course of the discussion, this method is in my own conception and use thereof an extension of Kant's transcendental method. The actual personality is a socialized self living and functioning as a member of a historical order. A specific historical culture is the indispensable matrix of genuine selfconsciousness,—the atmosphere in which personality develops and functions. The real self cannot be discovered on the surface of consciousness, nor are the conditions and categories of its development merely biological; they are rather social, historical, cultural. In the reaction of the human civilized individual to his environment there is more than the mere spontaneity of animal life. The rational, teleological activity of a self is *sui generis*.

The actual individual realizes and expresses his inner unity of life in relation to what we may call culture-systems or historical systems of thought and conduct.² These systems are spiritual or ethical inasmuch as they embody the spirit or *ethos* of a people or period, and they are historical inasmuch as they have continuity of growth and that individual and unique character

¹ I propose the term 'Noölogy' for the *logic* or fundamental theory of the *actual social and historical self*. The principles of such a method would be fundamental for the *moral sciences* (*Kulturwissenschaften*, of Rickert, *Geisteswissenschaften*, of Dilthey, and others). I understand by 'moral sciences,' ethics and social philosophy, the philosophy of religion and of history, and comparative or historical æsthetics. Although psychology has important analytic contributions to make to these sciences, they are fundamentally historical. The term 'Noölogy' seems best fitted to express this method of approach to personality regarded as self-active and historical. 'Pneumatology' has, on the one hand, too close theological affiliations, and, on the other hand, somewhat mechanical associations. I cannot, however, admit the sharp antithesis which Herr Scheler sets up between the 'transcendental' and 'noölogical' methods in his interesting book, *Die transcendentale und die psychologische Methode*. Professor Eucken, Herr Scheler's teacher, does not seem to insist so strongly upon the antithesis between his own and Kant's method.

² Schleiermacher, who employed the notion in his Ethics, calls them "Ethical Systems." Dilthey employs the term, I think, in much the same sense as I do, in his *Einleitung in die Geisteswissenschaften*.

which belongs to all genuinely historical processes. These systems grow and change as they get summed up and modified in and through the actions of successive series of social groups and of individuals. Illustrations of such systems or historical complexes of ideas lie everywhere at hand in the institutions of contemporary civilization. Such are, for example, the established average code of customary morality (*Sittlichkeit*); the body of authoritative current scientific opinion; codes of social manners; the working systems of industrial groups such as trades-unions, employer's associations, etc.; political systems of ideas (democracy, socialism, imperialism, party traditions, etc.); systems of religious doctrine and practice represented by various churches and sects which, of course, are preëminently embodiments of historical complexes of ideas, etc.

Now the individual enters into a reflectively conscious life, he attains spiritual maturity, always under the influence of a complex culture-life. This spiritual complex is constituted by the more or less harmonious blending for him of various partial culture-systems. These systems may sometimes lie in mere juxtaposition in his mind, or they may be in partial antagonism. For example, the systems of scientific and theological thought, of ethical ideals and business practice, by which an individual is influenced may be antagonistic to one another. But, in any case, the individual comes to his own as a rational personality only in so far as he assimilates and reacts to these systems. He attains rational self-consciousness and becomes an active spirit or person by developing conscious attitudes towards the various groups of commands, demands, and solicitations, in the midst of which alone a man can awaken to the life of reason. To take conscious attitudes in these varied relations of the culture-life is to actualize one's spiritual selfhood. The attitudes assumed not only vary from man to man, but in the individual they may be complex and varied. The individual may wholly reject some of the historical complexes of ideas presented to him and wholly accept others. For example, Luther accepted a mediæval philosophy and theology and rejected mediæval conceptions of the relations of morals to faith and religion. The individual may wholly accept

the scientific and wholly reject the religious systems of ideas of his time (*e. g.*, Haeckel and in part Huxley), or he may criticise and sift all. The individual may be predominantly receptive in all directions (as the average man is), or critical (Hume, Voltaire), or reformatory and recreative (Socrates, Kant, Goethe). He may be critical in science and merely receptive in religion and politics, or critical in politics and merely receptive in science and morals, etc., through all the possible combinations. Again, he may with seeming passivity accept and assimilate all uncritically. This the mass of men seem to do. But even in the latter case, there is in the mature individual an element of at least partially conscious reaction in apprehending and assimilating that to which he gives allegiance. The very process of appropriating into one's own spirit, of making one's own, the materials of culture is an individual reaction. These historical complexes of ideas which I have called 'culture systems,' then, are never wholly foreign or extrinsic to the individual spirit. Even in the limiting case of seeming total passivity just mentioned, the actual self is not a mere creature of traditional and conventional tendencies. And, indeed, the various partial culture-systems and the whole *ethos* of a period are vital and potent only in so far as they are absorbed and relived in the thoughts and deeds of persons. Regarded as merely historical, these systems are but slumbering potentialities of mental development and spiritual influence. But when they are taken up into the individual life and give content and direction to this, they become present, over-historical powers. The general movement of spiritual history has a certain continuity, but, as it is summed up, relived, and transformed in groups of men and in individuals, it becomes discrete, and the reactions of each individual and group to the culture-environment constitute a series of unique deeds.

Moreover, a historical comparison of the growth, the rise and modification and fall of culture-systems, as well as a comparison of the will-attitudes of living individuals towards the various culture-systems which constitute a general social situation, would make it plain that, in being assimilated and relived, systems of ideas are undergoing constant, although often minute and inap-

preciable, transformations. Moulded and modified as they are by the assimilative and recreative thought and will-attitudes of individuals, these systems rise and fall, stagnate and grow, and, in short, undergo constant modification by personal reactions. "The human beings who live, who have lived, and who are yet to live, form in themselves one immense system, in which the smallest movement of each single one is for the most part imperceptible, but yet affects by its influence the general unceasing progress. History is the relation of the fluctuations which occur on a large scale, from the dissimilarity of the powers of individual men. Our desire to study history is the longing to know the law of these fluctuations, and of the distribution of power affecting them."¹

On a large scale, of course, it is the creative historical personalities,—founders of religions, moral prophets and reformers, political innovators, æsthetic creators, scientific discoverers,—who display, in the eyes of all who have eyes to see, this dynamic and recreative unity of individual life. The preëminent individual is the chief originating center in the historical movement of civilization. Whatever view one may take of the reciprocal relations between great historical personalities and the masses of their fellows, no progress can be made towards understanding the movements of past and present society unless we clearly recognize that concrete individuals are the creators, bearers, and transformers of the whole process of culture. History has being and actuality only in so far as it is concentrated in the living activities and experiences of selves. Hence so-called general tendencies, social movements, the social consciousness, public opinion, the spirit of the age, etc., are actual and efficient only in so far as they are incorporated in the emotions and deeds of persons. And every man who attains to the rational selfconsciousness that is properly called personality, however little originality he may display, makes his individual reactions and affirms his personality in his choices and in the very variations of emphasis expressed by his attitudes towards the prevailing culture systems of thought and

¹ H. Grimm, *Life of Michael Angelo*, Vol. I., p. 62. (English translation, edition of 1898.)

conduct in the atmosphere of which he lives. These call out the possibilities of spiritual activity latent in him. Even the humblest man must affirm or deny the fundamental moral obligations of his station, and in so doing he is actualizing himself in relation to at least one element in the spiritual matrix of human culture. From this standpoint, the active attitude or dynamic center of personality becomes an ultimate, a limit to explanation and analysis. The active unity of the socially and historically significant culture-self is a cumulative and creative center or nodal point in the spiritual evolution of humanity. It transcends the phenomenal causal order. It cannot be dissected into elements or accounted for in terms of a nexus whose highest category is that of the mechanical equivalence of cause and effect. There is in the self an irreducible center of unity not residing in an inert substance, but consisting of a principle of actuality or rational spontaneity.

The unity of the actual personality, then, is more integral and profound than the psychological continuity of fleeting thoughts. This activity is always more far-reaching than that revealed by the narrow range of momentary consciousness. The true Ego is not the passing thought ever swallowing and being swallowed. Picturesque though Professor James's phrasing be,¹ conscious continuity of a flowing stream is not the true note of selfhood. In the actual, historical personality, there is an *ἐνέργεια* or dynamic unity which is realized and manifested through the assimilation and transformation of social culture-systems. Civilization is a spiritual process in which man fashions for himself ever anew the instruments and materials for the actualization of his possibilities as person or rational spirit. And the history of culture is seen from this standpoint to be the record of man's shifting emphasis, in self-discovery and self-affirmation, on the relative values,—hedonic, ethical, intellectual, æsthetic, etc.,—of the various partial systems or groups of ideas which constitute the spiritual matrix for the growth and movement of selfhood.

A concrete philosophy of humanity must be based on the comparative interpretation and evaluation of the chief historical systems of spiritual or personal values. Our immediate experi-

¹ *Principles of Psychology*, Vol. I, chapter x.

ence must be supplemented and enlarged by an interpretative consideration of man's spiritual history, if it is to furnish an adequate basis for philosophy. And philosophy must be historical, not in the sense of being an eclectic patchwork of dead and gone systems, but in the sense that only through a consideration of the entire culture-process of humanity, which is the spiritual kernel of history, can philosophy find a broad and humanistic basis of experience. Here, of course, I am more immediately concerned with bringing out the significance of the individual's place in the culture-process for an ultimate view of things. As illustrations of the shifting of personal values in culture-systems just spoken of, compare the ethical attitude of the higher type of Greek in regard to continence in sexual matters with the Mediæval Christian conception of chastity and of the higher virtue of the state of virginity! Compare, too, the relations of art and religion in the Renaissance period in Italy with the Puritan attitude in England, the Chinese attitude towards scientific investigation with that of the European, etc. The one constant and permanently significant factor in these systems of value is the action of the individual on them.

Personal attitudes of value shift and culture-systems change with them. When viewed externally, the contents of historical culture-systems are but fossil remains, materialized products of past mental activity, individual and social. Viewed from the inside, they become symbols of the birth and growth of personality into self-conscious activity. The real personality is not a substantial entity, but a ceaseless spiritual process. In its self-movement it absorbs and transcends that which seems to come to it from without. Historical human culture is the record and embodiment of this self-movement of spirit. The human self creates, assimilates, and transforms culture-systems to realize ends, — ends internal to its own nature and in which that nature expands from latency to life, from possibility to actuality.

What is the methodological drift of the above series of propositions? I can perhaps best answer this question by a historical parallel. Kant, presupposing the truth of mathematical and physical science, enquired into the ultimate conditions of their

validity. And he concluded that the synthetic unity of consciousness was the ultimate condition of the objectivity and systematic coherence of scientific judgments. Without the transcendental Ego, no Cosmos of knowledge ; so much I take to be the final outcome of Kant's enquiry.

But the difficulty remains that this is a mere formal unity, a *Bewusstsein überhaupt*, whose relation to the actual concrete ethical and cultural personality is not clearly determined, although in his *Metaphysic of Ethics* Kant suggested the relation, and Fichte worked out this suggestion into a system. Now, if we widen the scope of the critical enquiry and ask, What are the implications of human culture and of spiritual evolution in their totality ? we can, I believe, legitimately put forward the hypothesis of individual principles or spiritual centers as the transcendent or hyper-empirical presuppositions of the entire work of history and social culture of which empirical selves are the bearers. From this point of view, the matter of most significance in the growth and life of human selves is that their environment is at once historical and spiritual, at once institutional and personal. In other words, the active, spiritual unity of the individual comes to expression in a social or cultural environment. This environment is, in turn, a dynamic or moving system of complexes of ideas. These complexes are embodied in what I have called historical culture-systems, whose framework are the institutions of civilization. And what I wish to emphasize here is that these 'complexes,' 'systems,' 'institutions,' have been developed and continue to live and effectuate themselves only in and through the activities of persons. Consider, as illustrations, the influence of the founder of Christianity and his disciples, of Luther and his colleagues, of Loyola and his followers, on religious ideas and institutions ! Consider in art the influence of Raphael and Michael Angelo, and in science the influence of Galileo, of Newton, of Darwin, etc. ! Consider, too, what tremendous and abiding influences have irradiated from the small group of individuals who in the Renaissance period were the leaders and forerunners of modern science and of the modern attitude of mind towards nature and humanity ! The creative

personalities who usher in new culture-systems and profoundly modify old ones need not be clearly conscious of the goal of their own efforts. Indeed, such was the case with the men to whom I have just referred. "The men of that time justly deserving the title of innovators were those who foresaw the progress of civilization towards a vaster synthesis of the human race, and felt drawn nearer to God. . . . Rather than downright, genuine thinkers, they are champions of thought. It is useless to ask them what they seek and whither they go. They only know that they are pressing forward, and drawing the world after them in their course. . . . They disperse the darkness and cleave a passage for the new road rather by force of will and faith, than by force of reason."¹

The contention of the present article is that what these great historical personalities do on a large scale every individual who comes to maturity of life does in some measure, and that hence the central nature of the human person is actualized and manifested in his individual reactions as a member of a historical culture. These reactions are the affirmations of an ultimate principle in the self. The personal values which they embody vary from individual to individual and shift from age to age. But the historical and the over-historical are fused in the living personality. And if we interpret and compare the evolution of human attitudes or personal and social valuations according to this method, we shall arrive at the conception of a cosmic and over-historical system of individual spiritual centers which manifests itself in the historical movement of humanity. For the self is at once conditioned by and conditions its culture-matrix. In its active, conditioning aspect, it is a hyper-empirical meta-historical unity; in its aspect as conditioned and dependent, it is empirical and historical. In the former respect it is timeless, in the latter it develops in time; and these two aspects stand in organic relationship in the actual historical life of man. For this life is the constant movement of selves, from the dim potencies whose origins transcend experience, into the conscious actuality of personal life-values whose fulfillment must equally

¹ Villari, *Life of Savonarola*, p. 771 (English translation).

transcend our immediate experiences. This wider form of the critical enquiry, then, would seek to show that the presupposition of human culture, when considered in relation to the actual personality, is a system of ultimate dynamic centers of spiritual life, *i. e.*, personal principles. The transcendental ego ceases to be a mere *Bewusstsein überhaupt*. It becomes a *system of individual spiritual centers* which manifest themselves in history. And the empirical self is seen to be the moving actualization and embodiment, through teleological activity, of this hyper-empirical principle of selfhood. The self is thus conceived meta-historically rather than metaphysically. The logical justification and the systematic development of this conception must be reserved for another occasion.

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